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CH'S ACTING EDITION

GRANNY'S JULIET

(HERBERT SWEARS).

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TIME.—*Evening, during the serving of dinner.*

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One Scene.

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GRANNY'S JULIET

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GRANNY'S JULIET

AN IMPRESSION

By

HERBERT SWEARS

*Author of "The Whirlpool," "A Tight Corner," "The House of Clay,"
"Hero and Heroine," "The Nonsensor," "Home, Sweet Home, with
Variations," "Twilight," "Wayfarers," "The Mere Man," "Such is
Fame," "Two on a 'Bus," "Love and Dentistry," "Semi-detached,"
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GRANNY'S JULIET

First produced by Mrs. Kendal on Tuesday, May 23, 1911, at 47, Brook Street, W., on the occasion of H.R.H. the Duchess of Albany's Entertainment, in aid of the Deptford Fund.

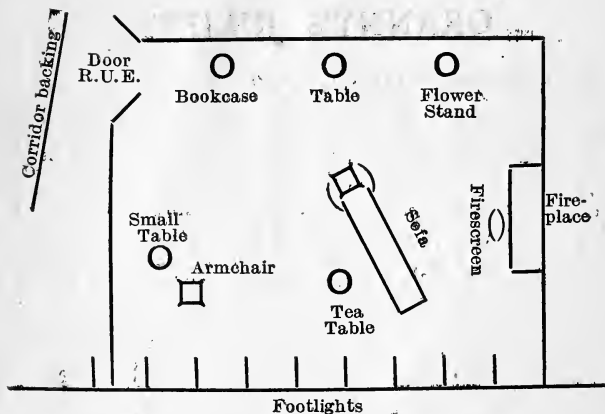
CHARACTERS

THE COUNTESS OF MILBOURNE *Mrs. Kendal.*
MRS. PAYNTER *Miss Fay Davis.*
MURIEL *Miss Rosalie Toller.*

SCENE.—*The small drawing-room at Milbourne-D'Arcy.*

GRANNY'S JULIET

Scene Plot



The scene is laid in the small drawing-room at Milbourne-D'Arcy. The piece, however, can be performed on a concert platform without curtain. Door up R. Armchair R.C., and small table R. of it. Sofa L.C. Occasional table, with tea equipage, in front of sofa. Fireplace L. In front of fireplace a small folding Japanese screen about two and a half feet high, by two and a half feet wide. Flower-stand, with plants in bloom, L.C. at back. Table C. at back. Book-case R.C. at back. Hangings, pictures, ornaments, and pretty oddments everywhere.

(Enter R.U.E. MRS. PAYNTER, a handsome woman in her thirties. She is amiable, stupid and quite devoid

of the faintest sense of humour. She crosses to sofa L. and glances at the tea equipage. Her face softens. She raises the lid of a dish and her smile is beatific.

MRS. PAYNTER. Crumpets! Glorious! (*She calls over her shoulder.*) Dear Lady Milbourne—crumpets!

COUNTESS (*heard off*). Hurray!

(*COUNTESS enters, with a large pile of letters.*) *She is an attractive woman of fifty-five, full of fun and vivacity. She crosses C.*

What a happy world it is! Heaps of letters for you, dear. (*Hands letters.*) What a correspondent! You must spend billions in postage stamps! No wonder the Chancellor has a surplus! You're an Inland Revenue in yourself.

(*Crosses to arm-chair R., retaining a letter and a telegram.*

MRS. P. People always tell me their troubles—and so my mornings are occupied——

COUNTESS. In sending pen'orths of advice. Very good of you, Laura. (*Sits armchair.*) Pour out the tea, there's an angel.

(*MRS. PAYNTER deposits her letters on the small occasional table, sits on sofa and pours out tea.*)

(*Opening telegram.*) I expect this is from Muriel. (*Reads.*) Yes. "Arriving 5.15," and it's now 5.5. (*Glancing at watch bracelet.*) Isn't that like her! Fortunately I sent to meet her. (*Taps her forehead.*) What a brain! What a grandmother!

MRS. P. No one would guess it, dear Lady Milbourne.

COUNTESS. Laura—You're an ass! A fierce, un-

bridled Filey ass! Charminglly polite, ain't I?
(*Opens letter.*)

(MRS. PAYNTER *rises and crosses with* LADY MILBOURNE'S *cup which she deposits on small table R. of armchair within easy reach of her ladyship. She then recrosses to her table and fetches a covered dish of crumpets.*)

But if you *will* say such preposterous—— This is from Mary Ditchingham! Muriel's been staying with her—I hope she was a good girl. (*Reads.*) The Dysons are there! Mary says they fight like Kilkenny cats—I knew *that* long ago. (*Glancing at letter.*) You've met the——

MRS. P. (*offering dish*). Crumpets?

COUNTESS (*shaking her head*). No, not the crumpets—the Dysons!

MRS. P. (*crossing to sofa and replacing dish on tray*). The Hampshire Dysons?

COUNTESS (*disregarding question*). It seems that old General Sandgate (*laughs*) Oh! I could sob with laughter. Mary swears that the old boy—— (*Expression changes.*) What's this?

MRS. P. (*resuming her seat on sofa*). ——or the Staffordshire Dysons?

COUNTESS (*excitedly*). Oh! Oh!

MRS. P. The Hampshire branch—— (*Takes a piece of crumpet.*)

COUNTESS. This is too bad—too bad!

MRS. P. (*raising the piece of crumpet to her lips*). What is it, dear Lady Milbourne?

COUNTESS. Laura, I beg—I implore you—to cease juggling with that crumpet.

MRS. P. (*regretfully replacing crumpet on her plate*). You know I would do anything for you, dear Lady Milbourne.

COUNTESS. No, I only ask one thing—don't waggle crumpets at me!

MRS. P. Has something happened?

COUNTESS. It's Muriel !

MRS. P. She's not eloped with a dentist ?

COUNTESS. Worse !

MRS. P. Worse !

COUNTESS. She's been playing Juliet !

MRS. P. (*relieved*). Oh ! dear Lady Milbourne, I thought it was serious.

COUNTESS (*gravely*). It's a tragedy.

MRS. P. Well, *of course* ! I hope I know my Shakespeare !

COUNTESS. My granddaughter—Juliet ! What's bred in the bone—you know the rest !

MRS. P. Flesh, isn't it ?

COUNTESS. Milbourne would have sixteen canary fits !

MRS. P. Canary fits !

COUNTESS. Have you never seen a canary have hysterics behind the bars of its cage ?

MRS. P. Frequently.

COUNTESS. Then you've seen Milbourne, at the mere mention of the stage !

MRS. P. But after all, dear Lady Milbourne, he married *you* !

COUNTESS. Yes, Laura, I'm quite aware that I was an actress—and I'm proud of it—but Milbourne isn't, he's always had a dread of Muriel following in her grandmother's footsteps.

MRS. P. Still, it was only for once.

COUNTESS. Ten to one she's fallen in love with her Romeo.

MRS. P. He may be well connected.

COUNTESS. Not he !

MRS. P. And perhaps she hasn't !

COUNTESS (*angrily*). Hah ! (*Reading*.)

MRS. P. How did it come about ?

COUNTESS. Mary Ditchingham has been giving some theatricals at the Town Hall in aid of a charity, two scenes from " Romeo and Juliet " and a concert. It appears that the prize idiot who was to have played

Juliet developed mumps at the last moment—so like her!—and Muriel begged to be allowed to step into the breach. Mary Ditchingham has the calmness to add, that she hopes the girl's success will win my forgiveness.

MRS. P. Dear, dear, it's all very difficult.

COUNTESS. I've known Mary Ditchingham since she was a long-legged fright in pinafores, and I always thought her my dearest friend.

MRS. P. I confess I've always regarded her as just a teeny weeny bit of a cat.

COUNTESS. Muriel hasn't the slightest idea that I was once a well-known actress, but she knows my wishes, and it's very naughty of her to disobey them.

MRS. P. Very thoughtless!

COUNTESS. Those are the facts of the case, Laura. What would you advise?

MRS. P. Well, it's all very difficult.

COUNTESS. Mary Ditchingham is the chief offender. I'd like to slap her! (*Takes up cup of tea.*)

MRS. P. Perhaps I feel a tiny wee bit of sympathy for Muriel for I once contemplated the stage.

COUNTESS. Where from?

MRS. P. I rather thought at one time—before I married Joseph—

COUNTESS. Of playing Juliet?

MRS. P. Oh! no—variety—they call it, don't they?

COUNTESS. I don't know. (*Drinks tea.*)

MRS. P. I interviewed a manager—such a nice person—and sang him a deliciously funny song. I remember the first two lines of the chorus—let's see! They went—oh! yes, of course! (*Sings in a very small voice to no tune in particular*)—

“I'm a saucy little flyer
And my front name's Maria.”

COUNTESS (*astonished*). Laura! Oh! Lor! Oh! Lor! Oh! Laura!

MRS. P. Quite amusing, wasn't it?

COUNTESS. Did he engage you?

MRS. P. He didn't go so far as that. But we parted quite good friends.

COUNTESS (*grimly*). You were lucky! (*Puts down cup.*)

MRS. P. I'm immensely interested in the theatre.

COUNTESS (*rises and moves c.*). Of course you are! The entire Universe is suffering from a kind of stage measles. In only one quarter do I notice a lack of appreciation.

MRS. P. (*indignantly*). And who refuses to yield this right and proper *interest*?

COUNTESS (*grimly*). The *capital* invested!

MRS. P. (*blankly, not comprehending*). Oh! Oh! Yes, I see.

COUNTESS. No you don't, Laura! That's why you should have laughed. Always laugh when you don't understand a thing. It stamps you as a woman of intelligence!

MRS. P. (*with a forced laugh*). You're so clever, dear Lady Milbourne!

COUNTESS. No, I'm not. (*Rises.*) I'm a distracted grandmother! (*Crosses c.*) What am I to say to Muriel? I suppose I must try and be cross, and dignified, and look as if I were balancing my coronet on the top of my head.

MRS. P. Well, it's all very difficult.

COUNTESS. Ah! you're such a comfort, Laura! You always say the right thing.

MRS. P. (*modestly*). I can't help feeling sympathetic. It's my nature.

(MURIEL *heard outside.*)

MURIEL. Granny—Granny!

COUNTESS (*looking round at door*). That's Muriel—the darling—I haven't seen her for so long—it's such a bore to have to do the Roman father!

MRS. P. Courage, dear Lady Milbourne!

COUNTESS. Yes! there must be no half measures. She must never act again! She mustn't marry her Romeo, and her grandfather mustn't know a word.

(MURIEL *heard off.*)

MURIEL. Granny, where are you?

COUNTESS. In here, dear!

(MURIEL *runs in, garbed in motor-coat and veil. She throws her arms round her grandmother's neck. She is a young and pretty girl of from sixteen to seventeen years of age.*)

MURIEL. Granny!

COUNTESS (*clasping her in her arms*). My dear, dear child! I'm frightfully angry with you, darling—I'm going to chastise you—with scorpions, you duck-pot!

MURIEL. You're not really cross, Granny?

COUNTESS. I *am*—I'm—I'm simply bursting! Ask Laura!

MURIEL (*crosses in front of COUNTESS to MRS. PAYNTER*). How do you do, Mrs. Paynter? Granny's pretending, isn't she?

MRS. P. Er——

MURIEL. You know you can't act a bit, Granny. (*Takes off motor-coat and veil and places them on table C. at back.*)

(MRS. PAYNTER *pours out tea.*)

COUNTESS. Indeed! I suppose now you consider yourself a Rachel and Siddons rolled into one!

MURIEL (*comes down*). Something a little more modern than *that*, I hope! It was such fun, Granny.

COUNTESS. Who played Romeo!

MURIEL. Such a dear! (*Takes cup from MRS. PAYNTER and sits on sofa arm.*)

COUNTESS. Naturally! Had he a surname?

MURIEL. Warrington—Lord Henry Warrington.

MRS. P. There, dear Lady Milbourne!

COUNTESS (*at back of armchair R.*). There was a circus man who called himself Lord George—something or other.

MRS. P. You surely know Lord Henry?

COUNTESS. Not from Adam! (*Sits armchair.*)

MRS. P. I know a member of his club quite well.

COUNTESS. Is he on the stage professionally?

MURIEL. Not *now*. (*Rises and deposits cup on tray*). He *has* been!

COUNTESS. Where?

MURIEL (*crosses C. speaking impressively*). He once played a shout—"Hurrah!" like that—in one of Tree's productions.

COUNTESS (*much impressed*). What a career!

MURIEL. He'd be there now, but—— (*Whispers mysteriously in COUNTESS's left ear.*)

COUNTESS. Oh! Oh! I see! Poor Tree jealous! Dear, dear!

MURIEL. I think I scored! Lord Henry said my technique was wonderful!

COUNTESS (*grimly*). It must have been.

MURIEL. Oh! Granny, I do wish you'd been there! (*Kneels beside the COUNTESS.*)

COUNTESS. I was always very fond of Juliet. When I was a girl there was an actress of that time, who won some fame in it. Curiously enough you are rather like her! (*Smooths back the girl's hair.*)

MURIEL. I don't believe she was half as good as I was!

COUNTESS (*gasping*). Well, of all the——

MURIEL. Let me show you how I did it—may I, Granny?

COUNTESS. No, no, dear, not now!

MURIEL. Please, Granny!

COUNTESS. No, no!

MURIEL. Do, Granny!

COUNTESS (*relenting and curious to see if the girl can act*). Well, it must be the last time, Muriel. You're never to act again!

MURIEL (*rises and kisses the COUNTESS*). No Granny!

COUNTESS. Your grandfather would be furious.

MRS. P. (*inspired*). We'll have a rehearsal.

COUNTESS. What will *you* play, Laura—Mercutio, or bloody Tybalt!

MRS. P. (*enthusiastically*). I'll be the prompter! You ring a bell, don't you?

MURIEL (*with superior knowledge*). That isn't really necessary, Mrs. Paynter.

MRS. P. Oh! I *must* do it properly.

MURIEL (*very superior*). A rehearsal is an awfully serious business, Mrs. Paynter. It's almost as serious as being in church.

COUNTESS. Well, aren't we serious! Don't I look the picture of an All British Shopping Week!

MRS. P. Where's my bell?

COUNTESS (*to MURIEL*). I suppose you did the Balcony scene?

MURIEL. And the scene with the Nurse.

COUNTESS. What shall we do for a balcony?

(MURIEL *moves to fireplace L., and fetches screen.*)

MRS. P. Where's my bell?

MURIEL (*at fireplace*). This will do, Granny. Of course, it won't be a rehearsal for me, because I know my words.

COUNTESS. But can you *say* them?

MURIEL (*up c.*). Lord Henry thought I gave quite a new meaning to the lines:—

“And when he shall die

Take him and cut him out in little stars.”

COUNTESS. Oh!

MURIEL. He said that Shakespeare, with his eye on the salary list, was obviously thinking of the sound economy of converting *one* actor into a *thousand* little stars.

MRS. P. Where's my bell?

COUNTESS. My dear Laura, you're like an oratorio—

Where's my bell, Oh! ruddier than the cherry,
Where's my bell, Oh! sweeter than the berry——

MRS. P. (*seriously*). Is that from the "Josiah"?

COUNTESS (*takes hand bell from tab'e R. of armchair*).
Never mind! Take your bell (*crosses to sofa*) and ring it, and ring it——

(MURIEL *moves to back of armchair, R.C.*)

MRS. P. By the way, *when* do I ring it?

COUNTESS. When you've nothing better to do.

MRS. P.) *rising and ringing bell*). I like this! It sounds quite like a professional bell. (*Moves down L.*)

COUNTESS. Yes—it's a bit cracked! (*Moves up C. to MURIEL.*)

MRS. P. Where do I sit?

COUNTESS. Give me the balcony! (MURIEL *hands screen.*) Thank you. Move the tea-things, there's a dear!

(MURIEL *removes tea-tray from occasional table in front of sofa and places it on table up C. at back.*)

MRS. P. Where do I sit?

COUNTESS. There is your balcony. (*Places screen C.*)

MRS. P. Where do I sit?

COUNTESS. You're starting the oratorio again, Laura!

MRS. P. Will this do? (*Indicates sofa.*)

COUNTESS. You're inspired, Laura! and your prompter's table is in front of you!

(*Crosses up to book-case R. and selects a copy of "Romeo and Juliet."*)

MURIEL (*at head of sofa*). Lord Henry always——

MRS. P. By the way, is he related to the Slingsby-Grimsby-Bingboroughs?

MURIEL. I don't know.

MRS. P. I once travelled to Ascot in the same train with the Slingsby-Grimsty-Bingboroughs.

COUNTESS (*up R. with book*). Now we're ready. Kneel behind the balcony, Muriel, and rest your arms on the top. That's it! (MURIEL *does so, moving screen a little above sofa*.) Round us are the greenery, and the foliage of the trees. Above are the star-lit heavens. Romeo enters. "He jests at scars who never felt a wound."

MRS. P. (*seated on sofa*). Oh! dear Lady Milbourne I've just thought of something. Why isn't that emblazoned over the entrance of the Automobile Club?

COUNTESS. What?

MRS. P. "He jests at cars who never felt a wound!"

COUNTESS. You'd better write to the chairman.

MRS. P. I will.

COUNTESS (*resumes*). "He jests at scars who never felt a wound."

MRS. P. Do you mind starting again? I forgot to ring my bell.

MURIEL. Well, do please be quick, Mrs. Paynter, we shall never get on.

MRS. P. When I count three I ring—is that quite understood? What a pretty bell this is, dear Lady Milbourne, was it an heirloom?

COUNTESS. No, it was a bargain.

MRS. P. Did I say three or four? It doesn't matter, really, whether I ring it at three or four, does it?

COUNTESS. Not in the least.

MRS. P. Then let's say four! I always think four is a much more tidy number than three.

MURIEL. We're quite ready, Mrs. Paynter.

MRS. P. Very well. It's quite exciting. I feel as if we had a real audience, and professional programme sellers. (*Holds up her hand for silence*.) One, two, three—— (*Rings*.) No, no, wait—it was

to be four. One, two, three, four! (*Rings triumphantly.*) There!

COUNTESS. "He jests at scars who never felt a wound."

MURIEL (*rising*). That's not quite right, Granny.

COUNTESS (R.). Eh? (*Moves to armchair.*)

MURIEL. Lord Henry always puts the emphasis on "Jests."

COUNTESS. Absurd! "Scars" is the word of value.

MURIEL. Granny, dear, surely Lord Henry knows!

COUNTESS. Nonsense!

MURIEL. When I tell you that he once played cricket with Mr. Benson!

COUNTESS. I don't care if he played football with Martin Harvey! He's wrong!

MURIEL. What do you think, Mrs. Paynter?

COUNTESS. Laura agrees with *me*!

MRS. P. Well, it's all very difficult.

COUNTESS. Exactly! Get onto your balcony, Muriel, like a good Juliet. (*MURIEL kneels behind screen.*) That's right. (*Continues*)—

"But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?"

It is the east and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon

Who is already sick and pale with grief."

MRS. P. I don't like that! Oh! No! Do you, dear Lady Milbourne? it sounds bilious!

COUNTESS. The young man's in love. (*Resumes.*) So on and so on and so on, till we get to your—

MURIEL. Cue!

COUNTESS. Of course, your cue!—"and sails upon the bosom of the air."

MURIEL. "O, Romeo, Romeo! Wherefore art thou, Romeo."

MRS. P. Why was he?

COUNTESS. Couldn't help it, poor beast!

MURIEL.

"Deny thy father, and refuse thy name,
Or if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love
And I'll no longer be a Capulet."

MRS. P. It's so odd! I never can understand people when they talk in blank verse.

MURIEL. *Please don't interrupt, Mrs. Paynter.*

MRS. P. I'm so sorry. It was just a thought that occurred to me.

COUNTESS (*quotes*). "Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?"

MRS. P. Oh, please go on, dear Lady Milbourne.

MURIEL (*speaking in school-girl fashion*)—

"'Tis but thy name that is my enemy.

O, be some other name!

What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet."

MRS. P. Oh! that's absurd! If a rose were called a mangel-wurzel, I should hate it.

COUNTESS (*to MURIEL*). You don't put enough heart into it, dear. Good heavens! Imagine that I am a gloriously lovely young man, with a face like Apollo. The night is soft and balmy and full of fragrance. Let your voice quiver to your thoughts—don't speak the lines as if you were ordering lobsters!

MURIEL (*rises*). But how *am* I to say them, Granny?

COUNTESS (*behind armchair*). My dear child, if you really feel the scene, you can't help it! (*Quotes*)

"O, be some other name,

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet."

MURIEL. Why, Granny, who taught you to speak blank verse?

COUNTESS (*hastily*). Oh! I learnt how years ago, when—when I was a girl; somehow the time seems very near to-day.

MURIEL. More, please, Granny !

COUNTESS (*thoughtfully*). No, no, I'm forgetting. This is not the orchard that I knew. The hues are russet. The blossoms no longer nestle on the branches.

MURIEL (*quotes*).

"O, wilt thou leave me so unsatisfied?"

COUNTESS (*quotes*).

"What satisfaction can'st thou have to-night?"

MURIEL (*quotes*).

"The exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine."

(*She makes a movement and knocks over screen.*)

COUNTESS. Darling! You mustn't bring down the house! It isn't fair on the other actors!

MRS. P. I think Juliet had such a *fine* character. She never, never gave a thought as to whether the balcony was secure.

MURIEL. Granny, you know, it's awfully difficult to play this scene without a proper Romeo!

COUNTESS. Good heavens, aren't *I* proper!

MURIEL. You're a dear, but you're not—

COUNTESS. I know! I'm not sufficiently spectacular! That's to say, I don't drive six motor-cars at once, and colour my cheeks to match my window-boxes.

MURIEL. I was going to say—you're not a man, dear.

COUNTESS. No! Now I come to think of it, I suppose I'm not. It's just one of those trifles that we forget at times. Well, as I'm not allowed to be a man, or to play Romeo, or to have a vote, or drive an omnibus, what *am* I to do?

MURIEL. Be the Nurse, Granny!

COUNTESS. Ah! It *always* reverts to that! Well, since we can play the part a thousand times better than any man let's snap our fingers at the wretches and let them see that here at any rate we can act them off the stage.

(MURIEL replaces screen in front of fireplace, L.)

MRS. P. I do hope I shall remember to tell Joseph!

COUNTESS (*moves armchair a little to c.*). And so I'll play the Nurse! In this instance an aged dame, suffering from sciatica and deferred wages. (*Groans and sits*)—

"Ah! my back, my back! What a coil is here."

MRS. P. (*with great intelligence*). You didn't quite finish the Balcony scene, did you?

COUNTESS. There were just a few blanks, not contained in the verse!

MRS. P. I thought so! (*Proudly.*) I know my Shakespeare!

COUNTESS. We've taken out a poet's licence and shot ourselves into the Nurse and Juliet scene.

MRS. P. But I haven't rung my bell.

COUNTESS. Good gracious! Never mind. Ring it now.

MRS. P. Let's see! Do I count three or four?

COUNTESS. My dear Laura, you don't count at all, you're the prompter!

MRS. P. (*disregarding the COUNTESS's remark*). It was four! Of course! I knew it was either three or four. Now then, one, two, three, four. (*Rings.*)

MURIEL.

"Now, Nurse, what news? What hast thou there?"

The cords

That Romeo bid thee fetch?"

COUNTESS. "Ay, ay, the cords."

MURIEL. "Ay me, what news? Why dost thou wring thy"—

(MRS. PAYNTER rings bell.)

No—no! "Hands"!

COUNTESS. "Ah! well a day! he's dead, he's dead, he's dead."

[] We are undone, lady, we are undone!"

MRS. P. (*reassuringly*). Oh, no, dear Lady Milbourne, you're mistaken.

MURIEL (*turning to MRS. PAYNTER, and savagely quoting*)—

“What devil art thou that dost torment me thus?
This torture should be roared in dismal hell!”

(MRS. PAYNTER *rings bell*.)

No, “hell”—not *bell*.

MRS. P. Oh! I beg your pardon.

MURIEL (*addressing COUNTESS*).—

“Vile earth to earth resign and motion here
And thou and Romeo press one heavy bier.”

MRS. P. Beer! Singular!

MURIEL (*turns*). Oh! Mrs. Paynter, *please* don't interrupt.

MRS. P. (*with some asperity*). I didn't know that intelligent criticism was called interruption.

COUNTESS (*quotes*).—

“On horror's head horrors accumulate.
Do deeds to make heaven weep, all earth amazed,
For nothing can'st thou to damnation add,
Greater than that.”

MRS. P. (*huffily*). Very well! I won't say another word—oh! no!—not one!

MURIEL. Thank you, ever so much! Granny, do you remember the speech beginning “Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds”?

COUNTESS (*still seated in armchair*). Do I remember? Am I ever likely to forget?

(*As the old memories come flooding back, the actress becomes inspired and the Juliet of years ago once more appears before the audience.*)

Will any orchard ever seem so fair, as that first orchard of the Capulets? Will any eyes gaze quite so tenderly as my first Romeo's? Will ever breeze

blow softly from the West as that night's silken rustle in the wings. Do I remember? Ah! yes, surely, I see a young girl stepping lightly on the stage. Her face I seem to know. In her ears is sounding that most exquisite of music—the people's welcome! Those unknown friends hold out dear hands to take her to their hearts—because they love her! They give her that priceless gift of sympathy, without which an artist cannot breathe. And then she speaks! The voice has a familiar ring and I can almost hear the wild beating of her heart, and the little sob of anxiety, as she begins. The play moves on. She meets her Romeo, they love with all their pure young hearts. Then the shadows fall.

“Come, night, come, Romeo, come thou day in night;

For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night

Whiter than new snow on a raven's back!

Come, gentle night, come, loving black-browed night,

Give me my Romeo.”

MURIEL. Granny, who *was* your first Juliet?

COUNTESS. She is now a very old woman, dear.

MURIEL. I should have loved her!

COUNTESS. Your grandfather loved her!

MURIEL. You, Granny! Oh! and I never knew.
(*Hugs her grandmother.*) I never knew!

COUNTESS. You must never speak of it, dear. It's the only secret I've ever had, and of course, I haven't kept it!

MURIEL. I won't tell! (*Kneels by her grandmother's chair.*)

COUNTESS. The Juliet of the past and the Juliet of the present! I wonder—I wonder if your Romeo was as captivating as mine!

MURIEL (*softly*). He looked—he looked——

COUNTESS. I'm sure he did, and would it make some one happy, if I asked him to tea?

MURIEL (*in a whisper*). Yes.

COUNTESS. Well, we must ask Laura! (*Rises and moves across with MURIEL to MRS. PAYNTER.*) She is ever ready with wise counsel. What do you say, Laura! Am I to ask this paragon to tea?

MRS. P. (*pauses*). Well, it's all very difficult.

COUNTESS. That settles it. He shall come next Tuesday.

MURIEL. Thank you, Granny. (*Kisses the COUNTESS, moves up and fetches hat and coat from table up C.*)

COUNTESS. You haven't looked at your letters, Laura!

MRS. P. Ah! no, they are often heart-rending! I must read them in the privacy of my room.

COUNTESS. Come along then, we must dress for dinner. Bring your things, Muriel, there's a good girl.

(MURIEL brings her hat and motor-coat and gets R. of

COUNTESS. MRS. PAYNTER gathers up her letters.

THE COUNTESS puts her arm round MURIEL'S waist, and links an arm in MRS. PAYNTER'S.)

Granny's Juliet! (*Whimsically.*) I'm sure my Romeo had the best shaped nose!

MURIEL (*indignantly*). Oh! Granny! That's too bad! He——

COUNTESS. Hush! dear. No more acting, *please!* Remember that like Sir Peter Teazle, we leave our characters behind us! (*Exeunt.*)

(CURTAIN.)



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